AGENDA ITEM: Regional Panel Presentation on Service Coordination

BACKGROUND: In January 2010, the Arizona Early Childhood Taskforce was convened by First
                   Things First to establish a common vision for young children in Arizona, and to
                   identify priorities and roles to build an early childhood system that will lead to
                   this vision. The Task Force identified six systems outcomes including that the
                   "early childhood system is coordinated, integrated and comprehensive." First
                   Things First's role to realize this outcome is to foster cross-system collaboration
                   among and between local, state, federal and tribal organizations to improve the
                   coordination and integration of Arizona programs, services and resources for
                   young children and their families.

                   To foster cross-system collaboration, FTF developed the service coordination
                   strategy. The Standard of Practice for this strategy follows this cover letter. The
                   Pinal Regional Partnership Council funds a FTF directed Service Coordination
                   Strategy and will be presenting an overview on how the service coordination
                   strategy has been implemented in the region. A panel will present on how
                   various community members are engaging in the service coordination effort,
                   the benefits and outcomes of this strategy in the region as well as the
                   challenges and barriers to implementing and moving a service coordination
                   agenda in a community. The following indivdiuals will serve on the panel:

                   Bryant Powell, Regional Council Chair
                   Camille Verdugo, Grant Partner from Easter Seals Blake Foundation
                   Rosanna Ringer, Pinal County - Public Health Community Member

RECOMMENDATION: No Action is required by the Board

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

Standard of Practice

SERVICE COORDINATION

In January 2010, the Arizona Early Childhood Taskforce was convened by First Things First to establish a common vision for young children in Arizona, and to identify priorities and roles to build an early childhood system that will lead to this vision. The Task Force identified six systems outcomes including that the "early childhood system is coordinated, integrated and comprehensive." First Things First's role to realize this outcome is to foster cross-system collaboration among and between local, state, federal and tribal organizations to improve the coordination and integration of Arizona programs, services and resources for young children and their families.[1]

Service agencies that work together and achieve high level coordination and collaboration are often easier for families to access and the services provided are more responsive to the needs of the families. Cross-system efforts may also result in increased capacity to deliver services because of the work that organizations do to identify and address gaps in service sectors. Therefore, by supporting a variety of cross-system efforts, First Things First will be instrumental in creating a high quality, interconnected, and comprehensive early childhood service delivery system that is timely, culturally responsive, family driven, community based, and directed toward enhancing children's overall development.

Cross-system efforts may include a wide variety of activities. These activities may include convening regional grantee meetings, networking with regional partners, planning and implementing multi-agency outreach events. However, the desired outcome of all cross-system efforts is to support organizations to develop relationships that allow them to achieve system outcomes for families and children that are not as likely when agencies work in isolation. A number of terms can be used to label organizations that work together toward mutually beneficial goals. Among these terms are: alliances, coalitions, collaborations, cooperatives, networks and partnerships.

While all cross-system efforts involve two or more organizations working together for a common purpose, these efforts operate at varying levels of intensity.[2] The intent of

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[1] First Things First, Arizona Early Childhood Model System, 2011, found at:
http://www.azftf.gov/WhatWeDo/Documents/Arizona%20Early%20Childhood%20Model%20System.pdf

[2] Coordination Brief, Grantee Resources, SOP, found at:
http://ftf/extranet/apps/pgms/pages/default.aspx?RootFolder=%2fextranet%2fapps%2fpgms%2fGranteeResourceDocuments%2fStandards%20of%20Practice%20FOLDER%2fCoordination&FolderCTID=&View=%7b718608B4%2d216B%2d4C1B%2dAFF5%2d83C31D969CDD%7d

coordination strategies developed by First Things First is to support participant organizations in achieving high levels of coordination that result in significant changes in policies, programs and practices in the delivery of services to families with children birth through age 5.

COORDINATION STANDARDS

Service coordination is a system-level intervention that supports timely and efficient access to services provided by public and private service providers in the community. The primary objectives of service coordination are to:

- Reduce duplication and increase access to services

- Improve service delivery timeframes

- Establish pathways and mechanisms for exchange of service delivery information and data

- Engage in service planning and assessment of service delivery that assures that services are provided in a collaborative manner that promotes flexibility, fosters positive engagement among providers, and provides consistent information to family members and the community.

Structures promoting this collaborative model may need to be developed in diverse communities. Building a collaborative service model can take time as communities develop capacity and move from networking to collaboration. Participants (key stakeholders) will need to commit to:

- a shared vision and common goals

- working together

- investing time and organizational resources

- respectful engagement of partners and collaborators

- defining outcomes and working toward them.

In addition, for collaborative service models to be effective, participants must be committed to the objectives of service coordination and have the authority to make commitments on behalf of their organization.

A collaborative service model includes the following processes and activities:

- Convening and facilitation of networking of partners who share an interest and commitment to service coordination

- Implementing a formal process to determine the current level or degree of coordination and potential for partners to collaborate

- Establishing a framework and agreements for meetings and decision making, including:
  - Governance structure
  - Frequency of meetings
  - Setting agendas
  - Attendance policies
  - Decision making process
  - Communicating meeting results and follow-up
  - Accountability
  - Assessing progress and outcomes
- Conducting a community needs and service gap analysis
- Identifying service delivery system improvements
- Developing a strategic plan that provides direction and focus for service coordination with defined goals, objectives, outcomes and measures of progress. This plan should include the following components:
  - Assessment- The assessment helps define the service coordination issues, needs and gaps that currently exist.[3]
  - Capacity- Capacity building involves mobilizing human, organizational, and financial resources to meet service coordination goals.
  - Planning- Planning involves the creation of strategies aimed at meeting the service coordination outcomes.
  - Implementation- Carrying out specific tasks and activities necessary to implement the strategies, as well as identifying and overcoming any potential barriers. For example, confidentiality agreements and mechanisms for sharing family and agency information across service provider networks.
  - Evaluation- Evaluation is addressed in the strategic plan to help participants measure progress toward the coordinated service system envisioned. Evaluation influences the future planning for service coordination and provides the impetus to continue, change tactics, or identify new opportunities for coordination and collaboration.

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[3] A Self-Guided Assessment Tool:
http://www.wilder.org/reportsummary.0.html?&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bswords%5D=Paul%20Mattessich&tx_ttnews%5Bpointer%5D=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=2162&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=311&cHash=fbb1b082b5

    o   Sustainability- Sustainability refers to the mechanism put in place to assure that service coordination becomes a norm as well as a continuing element of the early childhood system.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS:

Professionals implementing service coordination strategies should have knowledge of human services systems and community development; experience in facilitating coordination and collaboration efforts. They should also have knowledge of and experience with tools and resources to assess systems coordination, as well as a record of success in coalition building, community organizing, or, systems development and change. Experience in utilizing these organization and coordination skills within the early childhood system is highly desired.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY:

To address cultural competency objectives, early childhood practitioners /early childhood service providers shall ensure that children and families receive from all staff members effective, understandable, and respectful care that is provided in a culturally competent manner- a manner compatible with their cultural beliefs and practices and preferred language. Early childhood practitioners /early childhood service providers should ensure that staff at all levels and across all disciplines receive ongoing education and training in culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery. Early childhood practitioners/early childhood service providers should develop participatory, collaborative partnerships with communities and utilize a variety of formal and informal mechanisms to facilitate community and family-centered involvement to ensure that services are delivered in a manner that is consistent with the National Standards on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services and/or the National Recommendations on Cultural and Linguistic Competence for the National Association for the Education of Young Children."[4]

Services in Tribal Communities and Reservations

•Service providers should understand individual Tribes/Nations are distinct and separate communities from other Tribes/Nations and their governmental systems and structures are not reflective of each other. Services to Tribal communities and on reservations must be provided in a manner compatible with the Tribe's/Nation's cultural beliefs and practices, to include the preferred language of the community. Services must also be provided in accordance with the

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[4] http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlID=15
http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/linguistic

Tribe's/Nation's laws, policies and procedures. The effectiveness of services is directly related to the provider's consideration of the beliefs, customs and laws of the Tribe/Nation.

•Service providers can obtain information about providing services on tribal lands from a variety of sources. These include the FTF Regional Director, Regional Council members, tribal websites and publications, as well as official representatives of the Tribe/Nation such as the governing body, standing committees and authorized departments. It is highly recommended that service providers seek guidance from one or more of these sources before initiating services on reservations. Failure to do so could result in contraventions of cultural beliefs, Tribal laws or sovereignty.

•Programs will demonstrate their ability to operate within these parameters through prior experience working with Tribes/Nations, demonstrating that staff are culturally competent, partnerships with agencies serving Native American families, knowledge of cultural beliefs, customs and laws of the Tribe/Nation or a combination of these elements.

•Related to data collection, evaluation or research activities:

In the United States, Native American Tribes are considered autonomous nations with all of the rights and responsibilities of a nation. Understanding this, Native American Tribes are charged with protecting the health and safety of their people. To this end, Tribes have full ownership over any data collected within their reservation boundaries. This means that Tribes can allow or not allow any program to collect data from or related to any early childhood development and health program or activities on the reservation.

Any grantee implementing programs in tribal communities must have official tribal permission to collect and utilize sensitive data from or related to any early childhood development and health program or activities